

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE

SITUATION REPORT # 4

1430 Hours October 11, 2005

New Information in Bold Italics

WEATHER

Forecast: *Mostly cloudy across the Commonwealth with high temperatures in the mid 70's. Winds are variable, except in the Tidewater area, where winds are 7-11 mph, N-NE. A 75% chance of precipitation, except Southwest Virginia, where there is only a 30% chance of rain.*

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with additional staffing.

State of Emergency: On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage.

The Governor directed limited activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to coordinate the provision of assistance to the impacted localities. The Governor also directed that the Virginia National Guard be called forth to state duty to assist in providing such aid. Governor Warner authorized the Departments of State Police, Transportation, and Motor Vehicles to grant temporary overweight, over width, registration, or license exemptions to all carriers transporting essential commodities in and through any area of the Commonwealth in order to support the emergency conditions, regardless of their point of origin or destination.

Local Situation: Water levels are at a critical low in the Town of Big Stone Gap. Personnel report the Town of Big Stone Gap received an insignificant amount of rainfall over the last 24-hour period. National Weather Service projections indicate short and long-term outlook is not favorable to conditions which would re-charge water supplies.

Local EOC Activations: None

Local Emergency Declared: Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

Evacuations: None

Schools Closed: None

OPERATIONS SECTIONS

State Warning Point: Receive and disseminate information from Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap. Monitoring weather conditions across the Commonwealth.

STATE AGENCIES

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer coordinating with Wise County, the Town of Big Stone Gap, and state/local agencies to assist with identifying needed resources and developing plan of action. VDEM Local Support Services Division Director deployed to Wise County on Monday, October 10 to provide additional support.

VDEM Legislative Liaison is providing information to local General Assembly members representing the locality.

VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies and compiling a list of available resources. VEOC is polling communities throughout Southwest Virginia to anticipate long-term drought conditions. VEOC is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies and will serve as the receiving agent for actual and anticipated state agency expenses.

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

The local Health Department is assessing the special needs population in the affected area. VDH inspected approximately 30 permitted food establishments in Big Stone Gap to review operations during water shortage and to plan for water outage. VDH will develop guidance for food establishment operators on procurement, storage of water to protect public health and communicate that with food establishments. Anticipate placing 2 Environmental Health Specialist in the Big Stone Gap area during water outage to monitor food establishment compliance. This effort must be coordinated with the Department of Agriculture, which oversees other food vendors. VDH will prepare kits for personal care workers/Home Health and home delivered meals that contain water suitable for disabled populations, baby wipes and sanitizer. Obtain results of bacteriological testing on samples submitted from Lonesome Pine Hospital and Wallen's Ridge State Prison.

Office of Drinking Water Programs is working with local and state officials to identify and utilize alternate water supply sources. VDH is evaluating alternative sources of non-potable water for sanitary purposes, so that potable water can be reserved for consumption. ***VDH began testing and assisting with sanitation of new water line installation from Norton to Big Stone Gap today, to include issuance of a boil water notice until such time as test results are completed and any needed corrections made.*** A similar notice and effort applies to the utilization of water resources being drawn from the Powell River and provided by the VNG.

VDH is working as mediation/liaison between various entities to keep communication lines open and the public informed.

VDH will work with food vendor sites set up at Mountain Empire Community College during the Fall Festival to ensure sanitation of facilities and employee health.

Virginia Department of Mental Health (VDMH)

Working with the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VAVOAD) and other agencies to identify possible special needs in the community. Group Home operators have been contacted and advised to begin considering relocation alternatives.

Virginia National Guard (VNG)

Virginia National Guard is to perform 3-day time missions utilizing not more than 60 guardsmen:

Deliver and set up 6 blivets (20,000 gallon bladders) as required, at 6 locations as determined by the Town of Big Stone Gap. VNG will train personnel designated by the Town of Big Stone Gap on the operation and maintenance of the bladders and the pumps. Operation of the bladders will commence no later than Midnight, Tuesday, October 11, 2005.

This activity is to continue 2-3 months.

Delivered 2 trailers of drinking water to Big Stone Gap Armory today. Teams will prepare to conduct 2 trips per day delivering approximately bottled water, as needed.

This activity is scheduled to continue until October 31, 2005.

- Dispense 11,000 gallons of bottled water to and at 5 distribution

sites designated by local authorities. This activity is scheduled to commence on October 12, 2005 and continue until October 31, 2005.

Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC)

The VDOC has personnel and equipment on stand-by to assist with water distribution and other commodities, if necessary. Wallen's Ridge State Prison is entirely off the Big Stone Gap water supply, and is currently bringing in 90,000 gallons of water per day, with an average use of 35-40,000 gallons per day on non-shower days and 60,000 on shower days. Inmates are issued disposable washcloths for hand-washing and bottled water is being distributed.

State Fire Marshall's Office

Advising local authorities on jurisdictional concerns and technical alternatives. ***Working on developing a guidance policy for local fire marshal to distribute to facilities. Identifying buildings in the area with sprinkler systems.***

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Issued temporary permit for water withdrawal out of Powell River not to exceed 1 Million gallons per day on Friday, October 7, 2005.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT deployed 2 portable message boards on Friday evening, October 7 to support the on-going public information effort.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The Town of Big Stone Gap implemented mandatory water conservation measures on September 27. These conservation measures require businesses to reduce water consumption by 50% and residences by 25%. Businesses were also required to submit a water conservation plan of action to town officials. The Town of Big Stone Gap is monitoring and spot-checking water meters to ensure compliancy with conservation measures. ***The Town of Big Stone Gap is not expecting to lose the water supply from the reservoir until Monday, October 17, due to conservation measures taken by the public. The City of Norton completed work on the Norton-Big Stone Gap temporary service line intended to pump water over the mountain from Norton to Big Stone Gap. If pressure, water testing, and sanitation results are good, water may be available Thursday evening or Friday morning. Big Stone Gap continues to purchase water from Duffield (Scott County) and Pennington Gap (Lee County).*** Wise County and Big Stone Gap are seeking alternative water sources. The Town of Big Stone Gap has authorized the purchase of 2 truckloads of bottled water. The suitability of a 100,000-gallon per day well near The Town of Big Stone Gap's pumping station is under investigation. The Town of Big Stone Gap has also leased a portable water processing plant to produce potable water from the Powell River. Arrival of filters is delaying this effort, but the plant is expected to be in use by Saturday, October 15, 2005. ***A second plant is on order with delivery expected on October 21, 2005.***

Daily meetings are being conducted at Wise County Health Department with local/state agencies. Local/state representation is increasing and ***includes Department of Social Services, Ministerial Association, Sheriff's Department, Mountain Empire Older Citizens Agency, Frontier Mental Health, Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).*** Four objectives were identified at this morning's meeting: 1) position, test and approve Virginia National Guard blivets; 2) develop public outreach plan; 3) refine shelter needs; and 4) determine packaged water needs. ***The Committee is now working by sub-committee. The County Administrator is also serving as the Public Information Officer, developing and coordinating all press releases and public service announcements. The Department of Social Services will set up a special needs shelter at the East Stone Gap Baptist Church. The shelter will open when the need arises. The DSS will pre-position equipment and supplies 2 days before the water supply is exhausted. Wise County's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is conducting their first meeting this afternoon.***

Impacted in addition to businesses and residences of Big Stone Gap are: Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital, Wallen's Ridge State Prison, Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Offices (DMME), Mountain Empire Community College, Powell Valley Primary, Middle and High Schools, Heritage Hall Nursing Home, 20 food facilities, two motels and a campground.

Mountain Empire Community College will host the annual Fall Festival during the weekend period beginning October 15. Portable restroom facilities and hand-washing stations or hand sanitizers will be utilized for the event. The availability of an on-site well is being investigated.

Heritage Hall Nursing Home is utilizing portable restroom facilities for its staff and will deploy 5-gallon water coolers for resident use to reduce consumption. Laundry is being sent out of the area.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VVOAD)

VAVOAD is working with the faith-based community and civic organizations to identify available resources and collection points within the faith-based community. VAVOAD will send list of available resources and coordinate with the VEOC for distribution of available commodities. VAVOAD is also working with Health and Human Services and VEOC to identify special needs.

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